

Amendments to the Claims:

1. **(Previously presented)** A distribution apparatus which sucks in a liquid by distribution tips detachably fitted to the bottom ends of nozzles disposed on a distributing head and discharges the liquid into a container, comprising:
 - a distributing head including a plurality of nozzles;
 - a detaching plate having a stopping portion and provided with openings, which are larger in diameter than outer diameters of the nozzles and smaller in diameter than outer diameters of the distribution tips, disposed in accordance with an arrangement of the nozzles;
 - a holding means which serves to make the distributing head hold said detaching plate with the nozzles set through the openings;
 - a tip detaching stage provided with a stop member having a stop portion to stop the stopping portion; and
 - a distribution tip detaching means for detaching the distribution tips from the nozzles by means of said detaching plate by moving the stop member and the distributing head relatively in a direction of vertically moving apart with the stopping portion stopped by the stop portion.
2. **(Original)** The distribution apparatus of claim 1, wherein said distribution tip detaching means comprises a distributing head moving means for moving the distributing head relatively against said tip detaching stage.
3. **(Original)** The distribution apparatus of claim 1, wherein said distribution tip detaching means comprises a stop member up-and-down moving means for moving the stop member up and down.
4. **(Currently amended)** A method for detaching distribution tips in a distribution apparatus, the method comprising:

providing a distributing head including a plurality of nozzles with distribution tips fitted on said nozzles, said distribution apparatus being arranged to suck ~~by~~in a liquid ~~by~~ distribution tips detachably fitted to the bottom ends of the nozzles disposed on the distributing head;

providing a detaching plate having openings, which are larger in diameter than outer diameters of the ~~nozzle~~nozzles and smaller in diameter than outer diameters of the distribution tips disposed in accordance with an arrangement of the nozzles;

holding the detaching plate to the distributing head with the nozzles set through the openings;

stopping a stopping portion of the detaching plate by a stop portion of a stop member disposed at a tip detaching stage;

with the stopping portion of the detaching plate stopped by the stop portion of the stop ~~member~~member, relatively moving the distributing head and the stop member to move vertically apart, such that the distribution tips are detached from the bottom ends of the ~~nozzle~~nozzles.

5. **(Previously presented)** The method for detaching distribution tips in a distribution apparatus of claim 4, wherein the relative moving of the distributing head and the stop member includes moving the distributing head up against the tip detaching stage, such that the distribution tips are detached from the bottom ends of the nozzles by means of the detaching plate.

6. **(Previously presented)** The method for detaching distribution tips in a distribution apparatus of claim 4, wherein the relative moving of the distributing head and the stop member includes lowering the stop member against the distributing head, such that the distribution tips are detached from the bottom ends of the nozzles by means of the detaching plate.